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A CULTURAL PROGRAMME FOR NEW INDIA

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Founder's Day Address, 1968

Indian Institute of World Culture
Bangalore

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MY FIRST WORDS today must be to express gratitude for the high honour implied in the invitation to deliver the Founder's Day Address of this Institute.

The Institute is rendering service of the highest value in the cause of culture. It was founded on the 11th day of August 1945, the day on which the Second World War came to an end. Was it a coincidence? Yes, so far as the founder was concerned, but what a strange coincidence! It was the end of the war that somewhat later brought independence to India and India had to play her own role in the future history of the world. It was appropriate and necessary that the nation should think out the scope of that role and the best men in the nation had to undertake this task. Consider deeply and you realize that the country needed not only a Constituent Assembly to work out the political set-up but also a convention to consider the cultural set-up. That a great servant of culture received the impulse to found just such a centre of thought for cultural matters on the day that the war ended is a coincidence full of meaning for our country.

Shri B. P. Wadia was a great servant of culture. I had the privilege of knowing him. He was not merely a cultured man; he seemed culture personified, an impressive figure with an exceedingly friendly look, balanced, urbane, smiling, shy in the sense of not pushing himself forward, but affectionate and hearty as soon as you came to know him. He seemed an example of what a cultured person should be, standing, speaking, and working. He was eminently fitted to found an Institute which should serve the cause of culture.

This fitness came to him as a result of a long and active life of political struggle, social-welfare action, and practice of religion. He had the good fortune of association in earlier years with that great servant of humanity, Mrs. Annie Besant, to whom we children of independent India owe a great debt of gratitude for having fought along with the leaders of the country to secure us this independence. With Shri B. P. Wadia as with that great lady, all thought centred upon the desire that fellow creatures should have a happy life. This desire is the core and source of all healthy impulse, healthy thought, healthy speech, and healthy action. It, in fact, is a final result of all culture, as also the starting point for all growth in culture. The simple goodness that Shri Wadia presented to us in his last days was the fruit of a long apprenticeship and arduous practice in the processes that make the human spirit pure gold.

Shri Wadia was several years older than I, but the difference in years made no difference in the warmth and the ease

of our personal relationship. I received his love and kindness in abundance and was always the happier and better for having met him and spent some time in his company. He was a great friend and it is with a full heart that I render him this tribute.

Having agreed to address this gathering today of friends of culture who wish to honour the memory of Shri Wadia, I took some time to think of a subject for my address. I said earlier that our country needed to consider the cultural set-up for her life in independence. It struck me that it might be profitable to take that very matter as the subject for discussion. I propose therefore to speak to you today of a cultural programme for New India. It is too large a subject, but even if I selected a topic smaller in scope I could not think of making a complete statement in forty minutes. On the subject selected also I shall make only a cursory study of the points requiring consideration. I shall be content to indicate the directions in which my mind runs in relation to this topic. This audience is used to listening to serious discussion of serious topics and will, I know, be in sympathy with my thought and imagine what is left unsaid and get an idea of what I wish to submit.

It is a truism, is it not, that every country in the world has its own contribution to make to the growth of our race? India has its contribution to make. Is it too much to say that India received independence at just this juncture in order to be able to make that contribution? Those who believe that a great and benign power rules the universe may well feel that this great country with its ancient civilization received independence at this particular point in time just because it had to make this contribution and could not make it unless it became an independent entity.

That contribution, if it was to be of value, had to be its own contribution, the product, that is, of its own experience, and not a copy or echo of the thing last heard or felt. India, I have often submitted, is the eldest brother among the nations. It is the only nation today whose cultural history has been continuous for five thousand years or more. China was a similar country till some time ago, but it has broken from its old allegiances. China today is not the China that worshipped Lao-tze and Confucius as teachers. Lao-tze and Confucius have given place to Mao. Here on the contrary we still name as our elders the Singers of the Vedas and the Seers of the Upanishads. The millennia that have passed after that season of song and that vision of Being, Thought, and Bliss have brought many changes but have left the foundation intact. The life of perhaps no Indian today is the life led by the singers and thinkers of the time of the Vedas and the Upanishads, but the basis is that given to us by those people. The idea of the godhead and ideas of man's relation to the highest and to the universe have grown, but the growth is a superstructure on the ancient foundation. The voice may be saying rather different things but behind them all lies the same old substance, the desire for the well-being of all created things, *sarvabhūtahite ratiḥ*.

As elder brother in the family of nations, India has a special role to play. I once compared that role to that of Yudhishthira among the Pandava brothers. Yudhishthira's special quality came out most vividly on the occasion of his and his brothers' encounter with the Yaksha at the end of twelve years of life in the forest.

Living in the wilderness and owning no territory and no entourage, Yudhishthira was still a ruler and was responsible for the welfare of the sages that dwelt in the forest. Fate held a royal umbrella over his head. Only its cloth was all torn. It gave him no protection from sun and rain, but cast on him all the duties of a ruler. One day the sage of a neighbouring hermitage came and complained that a stag had

come into the hermitage and carried away the fire-making twirling-stick, and begged the ruler to get it back for him.

Yudhishthira started with his brothers, wandered over the forest the whole morning, and failed to trace the article. It was past mid-day and the brothers were all thirsty. Yudhishthira sat in the shade of a tree and asked the brothers to see if there was some lake close by. Sahadeva went up the tree, looked round and said that there was a lake at a little distance. Yudhishthira told him to go and drink and bring some water for the others.

Sahadeva went to the lake and attempted to approach the water. A voice from a tree on the edge of the lake said, "Do not drink this water without answering some questions that I shall put to you. If you do not answer but drink you will die." Sahadeva was not a particularly patient youth. He defied the voice and went to the water and drank. No sooner had he taken a sip than he lay on the ground as one dead.

When he did not return Yudhishthira sent Nakula to see what the matter was and bring some water himself. Nakula went. The voice gave him the same warning. Nakula too did not heed it, in spite of seeing Sahadeva lying on the ground as one dead. He too tried to drink the water and lay on the ground as Sahadeva had done.

When neither of the two youngest brothers returned, Yudhishthira sent Arjuna. He came and heard the warning. He was a great archer and marksman. He could locate a voice even when he could not see the person. He said, "Who are you to give me such a warning? Now take this," and shot an arrow in the direction of the voice. The voice said: "You are a great archer but your weapon cannot touch me. Do not waste your strength. Answer me and use the water of the lake. Attempt to use it without answering and follow your younger brothers." Arjuna said, "I must take some water to my brother. I shall attend to that task first. I shall come to you later." He attempted to drink the water and lay on the ground as the other brothers had done. Then came Bhima the mighty. He was even less patient than the other brothers. He defied the voice like them and like them lay a fourth corpse on the water's edge.

Seated under the tree Yudhishthira was puzzled. Brother after brother had gone and none had returned. Each of them could conquer the three worlds but four of them had not brought a cup of water! What was wrong? He came to the lake himself. He heard the voice that the brothers had heard. Unlike them he said in reply: "I do not know who you are but I must heed your warning. These brothers of mine are mighty men. Yet you have laid them low. If I do not obey you, you will lay me low. Ask your questions. I shall answer them to the best of my ability and drink the water of the lake only if you allow me." The voice put the question and Yudhishthira gave the answers recorded in the *Yaksha Prashna* episode of the *Mahabharata*.

When Yudhishthira had answered all the questions the voice said: "You may drink the water now." When he had drunk the water the voice said: "As a token of my good will I allow you to revive one of your four brothers now lying dead and take him back with you. Whom will you choose?"

Yudhishthira chose Nakula.

The voice said: "Nakula is only a step-brother. Arjuna or Bhima as a son of your own mother should be dearer to you. You have also to fight your enemies in a short while. One of these elder brothers will be of more use than Nakula. Why then have you preferred Nakula to these two?"

Yudhishthira said: "You have given the reason for my preference. We brothers were the children of two mothers. It is fair that when only two of us can live it should be one son of each mother. I continue my mother's name; Nakula will continue my stepmother's. If I chose Bhima or Arjuna there would be no-one to continue the

other mother's name."

"Prince," said the voice, "you are a righteous man. I am pleased with you. Know I am the Spirit of Righteousness. I wished to test how high you had reached in righteousness. I grant you the lives of all your brothers. Give them to drink of this water and revive them and take them all with you."

Yudhishthira thanked the spirit, who was no other than his father Yamadharma, gave his brothers a drink of the water of the lake, brought them to life again, and returned with them.

Mankind is at the beginning of a new age. It is standing on the brink of the lake of life and the Spirit of Righteousness is putting questions to it and saying: "Answer and drink and live: refuse to answer and attempt to drink and die." The race will be wise to answer the questions with patience and earn the right to live. To be impatient and proceed to live without answering the questions is to commit suicide. The eldest in the race has to act as Yudhishthira acted. That is the role that India has to play as the eldest brother: meeting the problems of the new age with wisdom and patience and saving itself and the rest of the world.

It is obvious that India cannot act as the elder brother of the household if it does what some other nation would do. Yudhishthira would not have saved either himself or his brothers if he had acted like any of his brothers. If he had acted even like the great Arjuna or the mighty Bhima he would have followed them to destruction. He acted as his own patient and noble nature prompted him and saved himself and all his brothers, the mighty and the famed as also the not mighty and not famed. To the spirit of history asking the race how it proposes to live in the new age India must furnish answers from her own noble tradition and culture. She cannot find the answers by acting like the younger nations of the earth, whether the mighty ones or those that are not mighty. She must act like herself and not like even England or Russia or the United States of America. On the tradition and culture of this country therefore lies the burden of saving this country and also the rest of the world.

Culture is the total of the change effected in our nature by the environment in which we are born, the circumstances in which we grow, by our reading and education and associations, by our activity and experience. It appears in our outlook, our thought, our feeling and our imagination; in our speech, in our ways, in our relations with others and in our doings. It is high when it is near to what we hold as beauty, truth, and goodness. True culture makes the ideal man.

It is necessary to keep in mind in this context that what we are talking of is not the culture of the upper ten or hundred thousand of the people but of the hundreds of millions, of the masses. They are the nation and the level they reach in culture determines the national level.

The tradition of our country bases the highest culture on *Dharma*: living in accordance with the law of our being. *Dharmasaram idam jagat. Dharmat arthascha kamascha. Yato dharmah tato jayah. Dharmo rakshati rakshitah.* When we conform to the law of our being we develop five great qualities: *Satya, Ahimsa, Asteya, Aparigraha, Brahmacharya* — Truth in thought, speech, and action; refraining from injury to life for one's personal advantage; not keeping more of the goods of the world than one really needs; receiving any benefit only after rendering service; and refusing to be lured by the pleasures of the senses. The individual grows great by practising these virtues. The nation is great when a large number in it desire and attempt to practise them. This was the code of conduct on which Gandhiji, the Father of our Nation, based all his activity.

Our people in past centuries impressed persons who came from other countries as highly cultured people practising and possessing these virtues. We were not a subject people in those centuries. Cen-

turies of subjection have no doubt caused some deterioration in our quality. Our responsibility in this new age calls for those old virtues more than ever before. Where, then, are we exactly in this respect at present?

Looking over the way we have conducted our affairs in the last twenty years from this point of view, we can see that in one important matter we have upheld the ancient tradition but in half a dozen other equally important matters left the old way and taken to attractive paths followed in other countries. India has always been a votary of peace. Yudhishthira, who searched for peace till the last moment and resorted to war only when no option was left, is our ideal in this matter. "There is only one defect in *dama*; there is no other; that defect is that the man who practises *dama* is considered by opponents as lacking in strength." "The mild Hindu" is an old phrase. It could be praise; it might be dispraise. Whether the one or the other, it is the ruling quality in this population. True to this tradition our country has adopted the policy of not becoming a partner in any power bloc. Pandit Nehru called this policy the policy of non-alignment. It has had some advantages. The disadvantages loom large. No country of high standing in the blocs feels that it is near to us or that we are near to it. The country which takes no sides in a war of ideologies must expect to be treated as an opponent by both sides and as a friend by neither. This has been brought home to us by recent history.

While in this matter we followed ancient tradition and the lead given to us by the Father of the Nation, in other matters of equal importance our leaders chose to accept the ways of Western countries or of Russia. Our people have always attached great importance to religion. To most of them God is a reality and a necessity. The Constituent Assembly which framed the Constitution for our country decided that the State should be secular and that it was unnecessary to express gratitude to God for the grace which had brought the country out of subjection into freedom. It is obvious that in taking this attitude the Assembly accepted the lead of the top twenty or fifty of our politicians. These gentlemen were mostly people who had received education in England or English education in India and had lost their heart to free-thinking. There is nothing wrong in free-thought, but it must come from within. Free-thought in our country mostly goes after Western models. England and America are secular in one sense; Russia is secular in another sense. In what sense are we secular? The meaning was not clear at the outset. It looked in the beginning as though the Government would not support any religion. Populations belonging to each religion in the country should look after their own religious affairs. But later on leaders have explained that the State is friendly to all the religions in the country; only, it will not favour one of them above the others. This is a desirable development. Religion can lead to obscurantism but it can be the foundation of all morality and clean living. The people who do not want religion and feel no need to thank God for the good that has come to the country are no doubt people of much thought and great self-respect, but when they refused to acknowledge the place of religion in the national life or to thank God for the freedom that came to us they acted for themselves and not as representatives of the huge population for whom they were expected to speak.

These leaders were no doubt, again, men of great importance. But their attitude could not affect the millions whom they considered their following.

People in Bangalore City are familiar with the numerous celebrations of Rama Navami and Ganesh Chaturthi in which the people participate by the thousands and which fill the place with music (and the intolerable noise into which it is converted by loudspeakers). They have seen the huge crowds that gather for the religious fairs in Basavangudi, Narabarigiri, and Vasanthapur. They have

seen the huge congregations that observe the birth of Hazarat Mohammed and the Bakri-Id. They can see the congregations that attend the Churches on Christian prayer and festival days. Bangalore City is only a type. Every large place in the country would show the same phenomenon. You know of course that people gather in hundreds of thousands for the Kumbhamelas. All this religious enthusiasm could be turned to excellent use to raise the population morally, spiritually, and socially. This requires organization. Lack of organization is resulting in valuable emotional wealth running to waste. We feel unhappy when the waters of a river run into the sea, serving no purpose on the way. We should be equally unhappy when valuable religious emotion goes to waste in this fashion.

Why did our leaders of the modernist outlook not give their mind to the need for regulating the religious life of our people? The reason is not far to seek. The bulk of our population is Hindu; a considerable proportion is Muslim; quite a good proportion is Christian. Buddhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism count fair numbers as followers. These religions have lived together for centuries but have led separate lives. This did not matter in the past when a king ruled and the people lived as subjects. Religion then did not enter into public affairs. Under English rule religion entered into politics. Our foreign masters found it advantageous to treat the various religious groups as separate units and deal with them separately. This led to some competition for the favour of the people who ruled. Differences between the groups were emphasized. When independence came to us the people following various religions faced one another as competitors for place and power in the new set-up. To have accepted the situation as one of competition might have led to much bitterness and wrangling. We should also note that though for convenience we talk of Hinduism as one unit those who claim to be Hindus or are counted as Hindus are not by any means a homogeneous total. It was on the whole, therefore, good that we kept religion out of politics in drawing up our Constitution.

But that avoided the difficulty only in politics. The difficulty itself remained and is present in our life. Look at the position. Hinduism is not a name that its followers gave it. The only phrase that they ever seem to have used to name it is *Sanatana Dharma*. When it might have started, how it should have grown, what made the leaders of the religion include in its pale creeds and practices so many and so various, it is difficult to say now with any definiteness. But this is obvious. These creeds and practices include some of the finest that civilized man has known and some of the crudest of primitive superstitions. While the religion as a whole was named *Dharma* the various sections were called *matas*. *Mata* is "view." Each was the view in religion accepted by its particular group. Each group kept its practices. The men of higher practices might help in the services of the other groups, but need not accept them. Thus this great religion came to include within its limits numerous groups following their own practices and tolerating the others.

But tolerance in religion is not enough. It is good to the extent that it prevents conflict, but life needs co-operation and active co-operation. Active co-operation is not possible unless it is strictly inculcated and continuously practised. Also under all circumstances there are sections which find profit in nursing differences. Thus in this religion we have reached a state of affairs in which the sects are for all purposes separate and treat one another as if they were different religions.

Buddhism and Jainism were once sections in Hinduism. Today these *matas* have become different religions. *Sikhism*, similarly, started as another *mata*. Its followers would now seem to wish to treat it as a different religion. The Brahmos of Bengal desired at the time of one of our censuses to be counted as

a separate unit. On another such occasion some leaders of the Veerashaiva community in Karnataka thought that they should be listed separately. Thus the tendency is manifest throughout the history of this religion for difference of opinion to harden to the extent of dividing the community into strictly separate groups.

Apart from opinion, the different names by which different groups called the Supreme Being have led to similar division. The two great names accepted by large numbers today are Shiva and Vishnu. Conflict on the ground of the name given to the Supreme Power seems to have arisen even in Vedic times. A great teacher had to say at one stage: *Ekam sat, viprā bahudhā vadanti.* But here again there will be people who find profit in nursing differences. The persons who live by conducting worship in the temples of Shiva or Vishnu would like larger numbers to come to the temples where they officiate. Among Shaiva or Vaishnava shrines themselves there would be competition between place and place and shrine and shrine. I have heard Shri-Vaishnavas saying that Ranganatha was more god than Srinivasa. Once I heard the priest of the Hill Temple in Melukote saying that the god of his temple was a poor god while the god of the temple in the town below was a well-to-do one. Both the temples are Vaishnava, but the priest's income is more in one case than in the other.

Differences in ideas in regard to the relation of the soul to the Supreme have led to the formation of three groups in the Hindu community. The Brahmin communities holding the different views have for a long time lived separate lives. The orthodox of the communities even today do not dine together. Intermarriage between the Adwaitins and the Dwaitins sometimes takes place and is normal among the Maharashtra Deshasthas. The Adwaitin, who is ordinarily a Smarta, holds rather liberal views but the Dwaitin is ordinarily very strong in his views. A swamiji of a Vaishnava Math connected with Udipi said in a gathering at which people of all sects were present that it would not be correct to say that all three *siddhantas* should be acceptable as all three were based on the Vedas. "You may as well say," he went on, "that as poison, wine, and nectar all three came from the churning of the Milky Ocean all three should be accepted. Adwaita is *hālāhala* [deadly poison]; Vishishtadwaita is wine; Dwaita Siddhanta is nectar."

I felt very unhappy when I heard these sentences. This was not because I am a staunch Vishishtadwaitin. My sorrow was that the religion to which I belonged was split in this fashion by the respected and good men who should strengthen it.

Within the groups themselves there are divisions which face one another with irreconcilable points in dispute. The Shri-Vaishnavas have two divisions, Thengalai and Vadagalai, the Northern sect and the Southern sect. The sects differ in their views on eighteen matters, but the one seen by all concerns the mark to be borne on the face. The text that describes the mark says that it should begin at the end of the nose and reach up to the hair of the head. But what is "the end of the nose"? Is it the lower end or the upper end? The Acharyas of the Southern division said the lower end; the Acharyas of the Northern said the upper. So the Thengalais have a line along the bridge of the nose; the Vadagalais do not have it. But the difficulty does not end here. The images in our temples are given a face mark. Should that mark have or not have a line on the bridge of the nose? The temple doors bear the Vaishnava sign: should that be a Thengalai mark or a Vadagalai mark? The more important temples sometimes have an elephant. The elephant is decorated for processions and this Vaishnava mark is put on its face as part of the decoration. Should the mark be Thengalai or Vadagalai? Groups on each side tend to become more and more vocal and cases have gone up to the Courts to get a decision

in favour of the one or the other view. It is all an exaggeration of a quarrel such as Swift made Gulliver see in a country he visited. The people in that country were divided into two groups, the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians. The Big-Endians said that an egg should be broken at the big end for eating; the Little-Endians said it should be broken at the little end. Swift was pointing out the absurdity of sects among Christians blowing up small differences into huge questions of dispute. Vaishnava or Christian, man is the same.

The ill-will between these two sects is carried so far that neither sect names the chief teacher of the other sect in its list of honours. Fanatics in each group will tell stories tending to discredit the teachers of the other group. The problem is current. Shri-Vaishnavas wishing well to their people have it on their hands even today and do not know how they can solve it.

Many of the difficulties of Hinduism can be traced to its having permitted everyone to worship God as he conceived Him. If each man while worshipping God as he conceived Him remembered that the other man was worshipping the same God as he conceived Him and could feel friends with him, there would be no trouble. But things never remain so simple. Soon each man argues for the superiority of his idea of God. This soon becomes a fight for the superiority of his God. As religious practice grew literature grew round it and we got the Puranas telling us elaborate stories of the manifestations of the godhead. The Puranas are not history. They are not always a statement of physical fact. Great poetry like the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* which began as poetry was later pressed into the service of religion and expanded and altered. We have an episode in the *Ramayana* which makes out that Shiva and Vishnu fought to establish who was superior and that Vishnu won the fight. This was bad enough, but later writing went farther. One episode in the *Bhagavata* represents Shiva as having lost his head when he saw Vishnu in the form of Mohini and run to possess him and suffered humiliation. Some one later thought this a pity and made out that Shiva did possess Mohini and Mohini bore him a son. That son it is who according to popular belief is now worshipped in the shrine in a place of pilgrimage. Vishnu himself was given many *avatars* and stories were told of them. Two of them even fought to establish superiority as between themselves. The marvels attributed to the persons in these incarnation and other stories show that they could not be statements of physical happenings. Prahlada is thrown to the ground from the top of a hill and does not die. He is placed under the foot of an elephant and does not die. It is obvious that this is fable devised to emphasize some important religious truth. Similarly Vamana is described as asking for a gift of as much land as he could cover in three strides, and, being granted the request, covering all earth in one step, all the sky in the other, and asking for a place for his third step. I have heard friends saying that Vishnu must be a rogue to be capable of such trickery. Without doubt he would be if this was a transaction such as you and I might agree upon any day of the week. But it is obvious to the slightest thought that Vishnu here and his victim Bali are not human persons. The narrative is quite obviously fable devised to enforce some meaning.

Similar considerations relate to the marvels narrated of Shri-Krishna or other personages who figure in the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* or the Puranic narratives.

I have not spoken of features in Islam and Christianity which should be modified to make them suitable for the modern age. However well-meaning, suggestions in this matter from a person of another religion are likely to be misunderstood. But this I must say: Christianity and Islam cannot grow to finer issues where they are the sole religions. They will gain only if they have popu-

lations of other religions living side by side with their own people. This is now the case in India and to some extent in China and Russia. But China and Russia now discourage religion. For good or evil all religions are really active only in India. If all other countries give up religion for any reason, all the religions we have in our country will remain with us, influencing our life for both good and evil. Any religion is at its finest when it appeals to the best people of another religion without expecting them to become converts. To develop in this manner must be the aim of every religion in our country. It is my conviction that all the religions now practised in our country will in the coming time find fulfilment in this way in the life of our people.

Caste is another of the problems that Hinduism has to solve. The system did no doubt ensure a great deal of discipline among the communities in the past and held populations following differing ways in food and many other matters as separate homogeneous parts of a large whole. But even in our times it developed a tendency to divide the people more and more and make some of the groups feel they were superior. In the last few centuries the number of castes has become too large. While the first texts spoke of four *varnas* we now have perhaps four thousand *jatis*. When selection and election were made paths to power and prestige in the last hundred years by the Englishmen who ruled us, caste assumed a political aspect. Our rulers used caste as they used religion to sow division among our people. The population lent itself to the plan and the Brahmin–Non-Brahmin question became vital in our social and political life. Our leaders have felt so unhappy at the ill-will bred by this problem that they want to abolish caste. They are speaking of the ideal of a casteless and classless society. Some of them think that this will be achieved by promoting inter-caste marriages. One of our State Governments seems to have thought even of subsidizing such marriages. All this merely shows that our leaders are very unhappy at the state of things now prevalent and are very earnest about bringing about a change.

A part of the problem of caste is the question of our Harijan population. This question has been with us always. Why the sections of the people who go by this name were asked to dwell apart from the general population living in our villages is, I believe, not clearly known. But they were. Also there has always been a feeling among the best of our people that this treatment was not good. Shankaracharya said: If a person knows that he is spirit and not body, I hold him as my teacher, be he *dwija* or a *chandala*. Ramanujacharya made it possible for these people to go into particular temples on particular occasions. Basavanna in his time abolished the distinction between the general population and this section. Gandhiji thought untouchability an abomination and not really a part of the institution of caste. Thanks to the change of heart brought about by his teaching and practice, one of our States some thirty years ago made it possible for Harijans to go into Hindu temples. Legislation in this sense has been adopted for the whole country since, and special measures have been set on foot to improve the conditions of life of these sections of our people.

From the point of view of law therefore we have done well by our Harijan brethren, but our practice is still far from satisfactory. As a society we have to learn to treat these brethren as brethren. These brethren of ours have in the meanwhile to remember that we who are offending against their self-respect are their brethren and bear with us. A great leader of ours who could not exercise so much patience thought that these people should embrace some other religion. It is to be feared that for a man who values religion that is no remedy.

"Casteless and Classless" is a good slogan. But can there be a society without caste or the equivalent of caste?

And without class or the equivalent of class? Even if we can achieve such a society, will the one class that will remain correspond to the "higher" of the classes we now have or the "lower" ones? When two men come together, said Carlyle, one of them is master and the other is servant because of the difference in their equipment. Was he right? Most people will agree that difference in capacity will put some men into power over others. It looks as if we must accept this difference in position. Caste and class are a natural development in our nature. We have to accept them and see that they do not lead to harm through complexes of superiority and inferiority.

The desire to avoid and prevent the sense of higher and lower is natural to all generous souls. It is without doubt one of the finest impulses of our nature. Culture consists in developing such impulses, strengthening them, and making them common. The sense of superiority that comes from what is considered a superior group by birth injures the health of society. So does a sense of superiority that comes from the possession of money. There is now a feeling all the world over that the gap in income between the many strata in society should be reduced. Socialism in this sense is a movement that modern society should accept. But socialism itself has various ideologies differing in major details. The socialism acceptable to the West is different from the socialism adopted in Russia and the countries that belong to its group. In this group itself there is now a split, China claiming that it has the truly socialist scheme of life and that even Russia has left the strict socialist line. The Russian and Chinese kind of socialism is called Communism and considerable numbers of people in every country in the world have now adopted Communism, whether Chinese, Russian, or slightly different, as the correct ideology for future action. This is the case in our country also.

The good point in Western socialism is that it encourages the individual to do his best and earn all he can. The good point in Communist socialism is that it ensures the least of the citizens a certain minimum level of life. In encouraging individual enterprise the countries of the West seem to neglect the need of the poorest classes. In ensuring the supply of daily bread to the poorest the Communist countries seem to be hostile to anyone rising much above the average.

Immediately after becoming independent our country started on a career of industrialization and modern material advancement. Our country in the past had a way of life which encouraged the individual to earn all he could but prescribed as the correct way of life a use of the earning for purposes largely other than personal or selfish. This was a diluted form of *asteya*. In earning all he can the man exerts himself to the full. Having earned it, he is taught to use as much of it as possible for the good of society. How many people with a large income will be inclined to spend a large part of their income in this way remains a question. But social opinion can create a climate in which more and more of such people use more and more of their means in the way that the bulk of the people desire. You may have heard people of the older generation among us speaking of particular persons of their time as great hosts who fed large numbers of people in their houses. If in the normal course we could foster the feeling that the well-to-do man owes it to society to share his plenty with the less fortunate this method practised in our country in the past would be the best way of life for us. It combines the good features of both capitalism and communism. You will remember that Gandhiji said that the well-to-do should regard themselves as holding their wealth in trust for the society in which they live. In holding this view he stood apart from those of our leaders who were educated in the West or were deeply influenced by Russia. His view therefore did not find favour with our leaders who took over power. They stood

for and adopted socialism of the Western type.

When we began the new career in industrialization we should have educated our people in the way of successful industry. We did not do this. Our leaders seem to have thought that, as the industries grew, the skill and temper required for success in them would grow too. That might be the case in a competitive and capitalist economy. In a socialist economy the common man is to be educated, or forced, to accept some discomfort with a view to the general good. We did not take note of this. We have in consequence in the two decades of our independence developed a system which discourages individual initiative, but does not ensure that each citizen does all he can for the country.

When the State distrusts the more intelligent and enterprising section of the population in this way it naturally has to undertake the tasks that would normally have been shouldered by that section. That is to say, the Government tries to do a large number of things previously done by the people. It can, however, do this only through employees. Naturally the employee works only with an employee's zeal, not an owner's. In private enterprise the owners would watch and take care of their interests. When the owner is government, watching can never reach this quality. So you find in our country's life today a number of what are called public-sector undertakings in which the nation has invested thousands of crores of rupees and which under Government management show incomes in no way comparable to what they might have yielded under private management. In many cases they show loss.

A good deal of the difficulty of our industry is due to the changed attitude on the part of labour. This change itself is in part due to the attitude of the Government towards capital and towards labour. Almost everywhere, capital was selfish in the past. Government had to intervene and prevent injustice and hardship to labour. Legislation effected with this purpose gave certain privileges to labour and placed certain burdens upon the owners of industry. Even the well-disciplined labour of Western countries is doing less than its best under the new conditions. Our labour has no tradition of such discipline. We find the new privileges incompatible with high production. Employer and employee would both get the best results when each says to the other, "I shall do all I can for you. You do all you can for me," and both keep their word. Employers in the past said, "I shall do as little as I can for you; you must do as much as you can for me." They had their day. Labour's day has come and labour is now saying to the employer, "You must do all you can for me and I shall do as little as I like in return." Hence the daily reports of strikes, lock-outs, *gheraos,* and the like in our industrial establishments all over the country.

Industries and strikes by labour came to us together. We knew too of hunger-strikes having been practised in prisons in Western countries. Gandhiji's protest fasts and *satyagraha* are a different category, but those who do not understand the principles underlying them may take them for other forms of labour strikes and hunger strikes. It looks as if they have been so mistaken in our country by nearly all types of workers in all services, no services, and by all professions. There have been strikes in the country by students, teachers, doctors, nurses, workers in Government offices, engineers, air pilots, bus conductors, street sweepers, and even members of the police force, and I know not what other classes of people. The profession of teaching has always been held in high respect if not always treated well in our society. The task of the teacher is sacred. He is tending the young and making them grow to good manhood. That anyone who has undertaken this work should stop doing it because he is not given the wage he thinks is due to him is tragic. Even more tragic is the situation in which a doctor who is relieving the suffering of the sick stops at-

tending to them for a similar reason. The teachers' grievance and the doctors' grievance may be cent per cent real, but it is difficult for the average looker-on to think that they are right in refusing to do their work on account of it.

The ugly shapes into which these strikes develop show how primitive we as a population have become in the main. We destroy public property and hinder hundreds and thousands of our fellow citizens who are not responsible for our grievance from going about their tasks. The people whom we inconvenience in this way are often old men, helpless women, and innocent children. Because the head of a department of a university or an industrial undertaking does not give us what we want we put thousands of the general public to intolerable suffering and destroy our own property. Then we have *bundhs* by tradesmen about prices and agitations by *sadhus* to prevent killing of cows and violent demonstrations over languages, about borders and the relative positions of languages, and last of all against such a matter as the acceptance of the Cutch Award. Then come our "Senas" in so many places formed to enforce their views by a show of strength.

That students should stop studying on account of grievances is more tragic than almost anything else. They must study in their student years. Not to study is to lose the time. It is indirect suicide. Yet to force the hands of some authority to do their will they resort to strikes. It can only be because they do not realize that it is suicide.

All this difficulty as I suggested earlier is due to the fact that we started our programme of development after attaining independence on the assumption that if we started the institutions the morale required for working them successfully would develop of its own accord. Give the franchise; it will be exercised properly. The best men will be chosen and they will all be honest and serve the country well. Bring in the form; the substance will come in as a matter of course. Treat labour well; it will treat industry well and do its best. Take care, that is, of the body and the spirit will take care of itself. Stated that way, it is seen to be all a fallacy. But we did not state it. We assumed it. This appears in other fields as well. We can take a look at some of them.

When we took over administration from the foreign rulers and started on our career as a full-fledged democracy we should have realized that the population of the country was the master and we the intelligentsia were their servants pledged to carry out their will. If the population were left where it was previously it could not have a will. We had to teach the people their rights. Indeed, in the words of a great English statesman, we had to "educate our masters." The population consisted of very large groups speaking fifteen well-cultivated languages. It could understand things if spoken to in those languages. It could express itself in those languages. Our Government should immediately have adopted the thirteen languages as official languages, treating one of them as the language for use in the offices of the Central Government, and the language of each region as office language in that region. Simultaneously we should have started to impart education in all grades in each region in the language of the region keeping a link language for all-India use and providing for knowledge of a well-developed foreign language for keeping in touch with the rest of the world.

The population would naturally desire that all business in each area should be conducted in the language of the area. We ought to have arranged for this also.

We ought in fact to have reorganized our States according to language as a first step and begun to use the language of each region for all purposes in that region as the next step; but we lost valuable time attempting to avoid the reorganization of States according to language, and are still losing valuable time now in attempting to avoid the switch-over to regional languages. The

switch-over is opposed by various groups of people for various reasons. It will divide the country, they say, and people born in any area will have to remain in that area and cannot find employment outside. The employment these friends are thinking of is Government employment. It is also said that we shall lose contact with the world. I have said that our education must include knowledge of a foreign language. Education in all other countries is organized on this same basis. This basis should do for our country too. When the whole population in a region uses the language of the region for all purposes there is an osmosis in thought and feeling between the intelligentsia and the masses of the people which makes for spread of all kinds of knowledge among the people and saves the intelligentsia from extravagance of various sorts. The employment of a foreign language by the intelligentsia in our country in all the work it does prevents this process and has resulted in an incalculable loss in mass education.

Not only did our leaders in politics fail to educate our masses; they failed to educate even themselves; and so we have in the last twenty years seen a change in our political morale that should distress thoughtful people. To teach the electorate to choose what is good and lead it to elect the proper man as its representative would have taken time. To ask for votes on the ground of belonging to a group was easier. Our elections, therefore, practically everywhere, took place on this basis. Our people for the large part voted on grounds of religion and caste and party. Politics in the Western style is not particularly suited to our people. Our tradition prohibits self-praise as equivalent to self-slaughter. Our new elections require that the candidate should say how very superior he is and how worthless his competitor. The higher nature everywhere is averse to competition for position and power. The best men in the community may agree to accept them if selected but would be unwilling to fight for them with others of similar ability.

It would be a very good thing if we could devise a method of selection in which a candidate will not have to say anything in praise of himself or in derogation of the competitor and the choice is by a process of selection by the majority.

One would think that the person selected should be such as can understand the problems of the country and form views on them and vote in accordance with such views. But some at least of our leaders seem to have the feeling that the member elected to Parliament should know how to obey the party Whip. Other knowledge is of secondary importance. Quite clearly this is wrong. It makes democracy easy but takes the meaning out of it, like a mango with the pulp pressed out. We hold in the hand its skin and stone.

The manner in which many of our assemblies conduct themselves on many occasions seems to justify this doleful description. We have not grasped the meaning of democracy. That meaning is that the people discusses different views and chooses what it considers best and Government gives effect to the decision. Calm and full discussion in an atmosphere where everyone expresses his views clearly and strongly and gives ear patiently to the opponent stating his view equally clearly and strongly is the one and only way a democracy can succeed. Just this is lacking in our procedure. We hear of angry scenes, members shouting against one another, sometimes committing physical violence. We hear of frequent walk-outs because the majority in power gets sanction for its own view in the voting. We hear even of members of assemblies leading protest demonstrations outside. A walk-out is no more than an expression of dissent. It is not so effective as a full and clear statement of one's case. The discussion in the assembly is not meant only for the assembly. It educates the public. Dissenting members will gain public support for their views more by

stating their case than by walk-outs.

It is the idea in democracy that the candidate is elected because the majority of voters are with him in his views. It is obvious that having got elected on the assumption that he holds one set of views the member must stand by those views at least for the term of his tenure. He should not change those views in the interval; or, if he does, continue as a member on the old basis. But latterly there have been so many cases of members changing party that the word "defection" has lost all suggestion of impropriety and has become as innocent as the word "election." Frequent change of party has had such a demoralizing effect on assembly business that all the parties are now considering how to curb the tendency.

What is disturbing in these cases of change of party is that the motive seems to be not so much change of view as the hope of getting a position. We gained independence because large numbers of our people were prepared for sacrifice of personal comfort and gain. Attainment of independence seems to have brought on a reversal of attitude. Too many of the people in politics seem to be thinking of personal advantage. Where previously there were at the most five or six Ministers we now have any number between thirty and forty. Those who are required to run the Government have to take in a large number of people as Ministers in order to get the votes of their supporters to be able to count upon a majority for the party in the assembly. The Ministers are appointed not because there is work for them but because Government desires that their supporters should vote on its side.

Quite a number of the Ministers in several of our Governments have acted in ways that have given room for attack by opponents for incorrect conduct. An opponent may not always have just cause for attacking a Minister. Yet in many of these cases the person attacked has been found to have acted in a manner justifying question if not suspicion. One Minister's son-in-law got a huge contract from his or his friend's department. The Minister was taxed with nepotism and said that he did not know that his son-in-law had been given the contract. Another Minister's wife started ventures which got contracts from his or a friend's department and made huge profits and became so rich in two years that she could give a lakh or two to charities. She had not done business before. But the supporters of the Ministers all talk as if all this was harmless activity, indeed commendable because the lady had given large amounts to charity. Another Minister was asked why he had arranged for his wife to get a site in a particular locality. He said he did not know that his wife had got a site. The same minister paid a large price from Government for a site adjoining his house to members of his own household which was several times the price they had paid for it just a little before. A Minister in another State, asked how it happened that his son was given some big contract, said that he and his son had effected a partition. Another Minister in similar circumstances said that his sons were running the concern which bore his name and that he had nothing to do with the affairs of the concern. A Minister accused of making money said that he had no property other than his clothes and that he was prepared to give up all of it for one rupee. Some wags seem to have sent him a rupee by money order offering to buy the property. This and much more has it been our misfortune to hear in the last decade. Grant all that has been said in defence; the feeling of discomfort must remain. Personal integrity is left in question and the dignity of high office injured. A minister effects a partition with his son or sons so that technically he has no interest in that concern which goes by his name, but can he expect people to believe that it is the same to him whether those sons prosper or are

ruined? Our *sannyasis* who swear renunciation are not expected to practise this utter detachment. Why should our Ministers expect people to believe that they are capable of it? The fact seems to be that we as a people have ceased to believe that we must maintain high traditions and make sacrifices in the service of the country. Politics has been turned into a career, it seems, and profit, not service of the community, has become the motive for work in it.

And how do our leaders react to such complaints? Persons in power are accused of having resorted to questionable practices; smaller people are accused of corruption: some of our leaders say that such evil must be put down; others say corruption can be found everywhere. We tarnish the image of our nation, they add, by making too much of such corruption as there is here.

What a sad state we are in! If all the rest of the world were corrupt we should still seek to get rid of what corruption we have here now. Is the "image" of our country more important than its well-being?

We have heard even more curious replies to complaints in this matter. "The official comes from the people; his quality is their quality; how can you complain? An official cannot take a bribe if someone does not offer a bribe. Stop offering the bribe."

There is obviously some confusion in this kind of talk. The whole population is not corrupt. The whole population is not offering bribes. Those who are complaining and the gentlemen answering at least are free from corruption. If they were the only ones so free, it would be their business to do their utmost to rid our society of the evil.

Truly have we departed from the ideals left us as a legacy by the Father of the Nation. There was a parting of the ways between our Congress and Gandhiji when our leaders decided to form the first government in the name of the Congress; but our leaders then did not realize what deterioration in ideals they were initiating when they rejected Gandhiji's advice. Twenty years have passed and several of our Governments are now proposing to do something that would have shocked Gandhiji to death. Gandhiji thought of drinking as a mortal evil; our Governments ought not to make money by organizing the sale of liquor. We started with his ideal, but he is gone and his memory is fading. We erect statues to him but do not believe in prohibition. And why? The arguments are those which had been advanced again and again by the people who do not want it and had been answered again and again by Mahatmaji. "We cannot make people moral by law; we are unable to enforce prohibition; worst of all, we want the money." It is difficult to see how a people can go further down.

How unpleasant again it is to think that those of our leaders who wish to make our society classless propose to break promises solemnly made to one class of people by the Government of the country in the first years of our independence! Sardar Patel had a very difficult task in making our vast country come under one administration. He accomplished it by promising the continuance of certain special privileges to the rulers of what had been Indian States under British rule. The princes themselves, in many cases, made the process easy by willing consent to the arrangement proposed by the Sardar. The privileges, we are told now, are incompatible with our ideal of a classless society. So we must go back upon the promise made by our first Government.

The idea of a government resiling from a promise made by its predecessors (not displaced by revolution) for such a reason should normally be condemned as showing lack of moral sense. It would be immoral in a person and cannot be different in a government.

Then the way in which we have borrowed large amounts from great nations and small and received gifts of food and cash from almost any country has had a demoralizing effect on our national character.

We have not been sufficiently careful either in using the money we have borrowed. Audit reports are full of instances of transactions of buying, making, storing, or selling which show deplorable lack of care if not of scruple.

Latterly the idea of governments running lotteries for income has got hold of us. It is not good for men to look to chance for fortune. To labour and earn strengthens moral fibre; gain in a gamble weakens it. It is not good that governments should foster in people a desire to stake a little in the hope of large gains.

As in matters of religion, so in many social matters, our leaders were so taken with what is prevalent in the West that they wished to make laws to enforce their views. One of these matters was marriage; another the habit our women have of wearing gold ornaments. Some change in such matters might have been desirable but we should have educated public opinion in all of them before proceeding to make changes. A reform must first take place in the mind; it then takes place in life easily and naturally. If it is imposed from above the process is only partly effective and even in that part causes much discomfort.

Our fall in moral standards since our independence is seen also in our literature and the cinema. Our society has its evils, as any society has. We who are living in it know that there was no need for Miss Mayo to come, more or less under the auspices of our then rulers, from America to tell us of the dirt in our life. But each civilization has built up its own conventions to minimize evils and, where they could not be prevented, to keep them from polluting the general stream of life. Circumstances in Western countries have led to literature there about Lady Chatterley or Prufrock or the dirt of Dublin life. Young authors among us, without the causes that led to such writing in the West, have begun to write in a similar vein here. Pope in eighteenth-century England deplored the deterioration in moral sense which made maidens smile where they had blushed before. Some of our writing today would have to be objected to as doing something worse. And our cinema posters are reaching degrees of putridity that an earlier generation would have thought impossible in this country.

Particular journals publish lives of actresses and pictures of doings in one country or another that must be unhealthy feeding for any person but must be pernicious and demoralizing to young people growing into the sex sense. Openness of this kind is defended on the ground that our sculpture shows instances of similar practice in the past and that the people require entertainment and the writer or the cinema must provide it. This defence cannot stand. The arts must provide the entertainment the people want? No. They should know and teach people something else. Man does not grow by indulging all his physical impulses to the full. He grows by holding them in check, enjoying while controlling himself. Control is as important as indulgence. Mere indulgence is self-destruction.

Man must remember that Woman is Mother. Let him look on an uncovered figure of woman remembering that he is looking on the Mother. To look on it lasciviously is to accept the level of the beast for himself and his children.

And then our propaganda regarding birth-control. Control of the number of births in the country is necessary. Where the population has not realized the need for this control, propaganda is necessary. But propaganda should be to the persons of child-bearing age and its language should observe the decorum of civilized life. Our propaganda about loops and pills has cast all restraint to the winds and is addressed to all and sundry.

Having no target it reaches none and the only result it achieves is to foul young ears and shame decent people. Some have realized the need for birth-control as a result of all this activity, but that is the result not of the general propaganda but of communication by competent people with the people who have to practise control.

Further, the tacit assumption behind the advertisements of loop and pill, that indulgence in sex is not objectionable if conception can be avoided, is dangerous and morally degrading. Hunger and sex are primal facts of life. We cannot ignore them. We must accept them, but as surely we must control them. Not to control is to perish. What we must teach ourselves and our society is birth-control through self-control. If all the self-control of which we are capable is about to fail we may resort to loop and pill. Doing so, however, we should remember that we are losing in moral stature. Surely we are not going to give up the old fivefold law and adopt *asatya, himsa, steya, parigraha,* and *a-brahmacharya*?

I have not spoken of the effects of modernity in our arts. Our music and dancing have for the most part retained the heights they have inherited. Our painting seems to have taken to some new ways. I am not competent to speak of these developments. There does not seem to be much sculpture in the country today. In architecture in the way of official buildings and dwelling-houses we seem to have considerable activity. It does not look as if there is any art in it. In any case these arts are at present only an expression of culture. They no doubt are causes as well as results of culture, but there is not enough of them today to produce an effect upon the masses of the population.

What I have been thinking so far leaves me with the feeling that we are getting into a state of anarchy in our attitudes and manners. Take these matters of very recent occurrence.

A Minister in a State is reported by the representative of one paper who was not present at a news conference as having spoken in derogation of a community. Members of Parliament raise the matter in the House. The Minister here denies having made the remarks attributed to him. Those who have hold of the matter persist. The Chief Minister of the State holds an enquiry. The representatives of other papers present at the conference say that the Minister did not make such remarks. This is reported to Parliament but the Members who have hold of the matter are not satisfied and insist that the Minister should be held guilty and action taken.

A film pictures Arundhati as a Brahmin woman. A section of Harijans who are called Arundhatiyas object on the ground that Arundhati the mother of the community should have been of their community. The Chief Minister of the State expresses sympathy. Those who complained know only that Arundhati was their mother and not the story of how they became Harijans. Arundhati was a brahmin. Her sons also were brahmins. For something they did they were unjustly cursed by an enemy of their father to become outcastes. The curse did not include their mother. Should the children object to the mother remaining where she was? Why do our Harijan brethren object to the cinema story and why does our leader the Chief Minister express sympathy with them without enquiring into the details of the old story?

Provisions supplied to a temple for the preparation of food for consecration are known by tradition as *Mohini*. Why the provisions go by this name is not known. Some facetious person in a State Assembly asked how this name has come into vogue and whether it had anything to do with the Mohini incarnation of Vishnu? The discussion developed into a joke and a Minister talking on the question stated that Vishnu assumed the form of Mohini to entice Shiva.

I have mentioned earlier how the

followers of Shiva and Vishnu played with fables to prove each the superiority of his God. Even they did not say that Vishnu wanted to entice Shiva and became Mohini. Where did our leader the Minister get the information?

Within the fortnight news was published in the papers of an order issued by the Chief Secretary of one of our Governments directing that pictures of gods and goddesses exhibited in Government offices should be quietly removed without giving room to commotion. The directive was issued confidentially but could not remain secret. Many of the officers who had to take action would be people who disliked the directive. Public comment followed and it was stated on behalf of Government that our State is secular and that some persons of a movement called the self-respect movement had expressed the distress they experienced when they saw those pictures and therefore the directive had been issued.

The explanation should appear to anyone giving a little thought to it quite inept. Some self-respectors make a representation and the Chief Secretary takes action on the representation? Would he take similar action on ten other representations that may be made by ten other groups of people? It was also said that the Chief Secretary had taken the action himself and not with the approval of the Government and that the Chief Minister was looking into the matter. Does this Chief Secretary take action in other matters in this way? Has he the power? Is this the way that a Government is run, the Chief Secretary issuing a directive he considers proper and the Chief Minister stepping in and looking into the matter when there is a complaint?

Truly this is a state of chaos and our condition is parlous.

I seem to have talked of too many things but after giving culture the definition I proposed earlier this is inevitable. Our culture touches the whole of our life and if we wish to make a programme for improving in culture we have to take a look at all our life. This is what I have attempted to do. Indeed, I have not covered the whole ground.

Seeing that our condition today is more or less as I have described it, what is the cultural programme for our country in the immediate future?

First we have to accept religion as a prime necessity for our population. This population cannot do without religion; at any rate for some time. That means that we reshape what we have inherited to suit the new time. We have to remember that Hinduism is *Sanatana Dharma*. It is the eternal religion. It is the universal religion. *Ekam sat, viprā bahudhā vadanti* is its basic text. We Hindus must learn to think of the numerous gods we worship as names and forms of the one nameless and formless Supreme who nevertheless appears with name and form for those who wish to worship him in that manner. We should remember that all stories making out that god is male or female and has wife and children and friends and enemies are designed to make religious truth easy to follow. We should get back the simplicity and purity of *Sanatana Dharma*. We should interpret the fables our forefathers constructed and cease to talk as if they were all records of physical fact. We should refuse to accept marvel and miracle, and remember that the greatest marvel and miracle of all is our life. We miss the marvel because we take it for granted. Accepting religion as a prime necessity of our people's life, we have to accept God as the central fact of religion, and posit the highest conception of Deity that the spirit of man has known for universal acceptance. That conception will include the finest ideas not only of what in the past was known as *Sanatana Dharma* and is now called Hinduism but the finest ideas of Jainism, Buddhism, and of the religions taught by Zoroaster and Christ and Mohammed. *Sanatana Dharma* has in

fact to become in truth what in its name it claims to be. It has to become the religion of all mankind and of all the world. In its new shape Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam will be so many sects each giving something to the others to help them to fulfil themselves. In this religion there will be room for even those who say there is no God other than human good. What the older religions called God is only this human good or the good of all living things: *Sarva-bhuta-hite ratiḥ*. The old religions described God as the friend of the poor, the uplifter of the fallen, and the comforter of the distressed. Communism worships Lenin for being precisely this: friend of the poor, uplifter of the fallen, comforter of the distressed. Lenin is a person in time and space. The archetype of Lenin for all time and space religion has called God.

As old ideas of godhead take new forms for the modern mind the old sanctions of morality also take new forms. For the man who knows he has acted well or ill his heart is heaven or hell. The man who has acted foolishly will not need to take a new birth to be a donkey. He is that here and now though his form remains human. The direction in the old form that a man should do all things as if God were watching him becomes in the new form: Do everything in the certain knowledge that the highest within you is watching you.

The *siddhantas* and other views in philosophy should be taken as equally true, each for the type of personality requiring it, none of them superior to the others.

Similarly the castes in our society should learn to feel that all of them are identical. The system achieved in the past for huge masses of the population what vegetarian societies and prohibition are now vainly attempting to do for present-day society. We have to consider if we can refashion the system so as to remove the irritating features but retain these good points.

We have to give our people a sense of ownership of the country. Ruled for centuries by princes and the last two centuries by a foreign power, this population has forgotten what it is to hold its head high. Gandhiji brought into our lives a new sense of self-respect. This sense has to be nursed, yet prevented from growing excessive.

Our people are now ruling themselves. They belong to fifteen language groups. They united to fight a foreign government. They must keep united for the new life. Each language group can live a full life only in its language, but it has to say to itself day in and day out that we are members one of another and that all the other fourteen languages are ours. We must all accept all Indian languages and deal with the population in each area in its language. We should not say that one of our languages should not be put in a superior position by being made a link language. At present, owing to historical reasons, the only foreign language we have is English. We may keep it but provide for sufficient numbers of our people picking up French, German, Russian, Japanese, Spanish, or any one or two of a few other languages of Africa and Asia.

Our fifteen languages are well developed but are not adequate for modern life. We should have organizations in each language area which will set about enriching them and making them competent instruments for modern living. Translation on a large scale of the great books of world literature and of the great books of each language into every other language is an essential part of this task.

Our educational system should provide for some numbers of children in every area learning languages of other areas. Scholarships for those who learn languages in this way should be given in every State.

Our education should provide for all-India propaganda about the cultures of every part of the country. Folk song

and folk story as well as first-class literature from every language must be translated into every other language. Courses of lectures by competent persons from each area on the life and culture of the area should be arranged for in other areas. Our Universities should have departments in which there will be at least two members on the staff competent to speak of each language and its culture. Advanced study in such subjects by students belonging to the University should be encouraged by the institution of scholarships.

The aim in fact should be to make every language grow high and make its children feel that they are members of the same family as those apeaking the sister language. In particular we have to build up a library of up-to-date science knowledge in each language. We have to remember that Japan and Russia had to put in fifty years of hard work to come out of medievalism into the science age. We are not in the medieval age in science subjects but science today is not where it was twenty years ago. We shall require fifty years of hard work if we wish to stand shoulder to shoulder with the advanced nations.

We should remember that the fifty years should be filled with hard work. Strikes by young persons or groups of persons in particular circumstances may be perfectly justified but every strike hurts not merely the persons whom the strikers consider opponents but the country as a whole. Our students have to become first-class workers and equal the best students of other countries. Our industries have to produce quality goods in sufficient quantity to compare well with the countries industrially advanced. Every strike delays the process of growth and inflicts permanent injury on the life of the nation.

That in rough outline and with many gaps is the programme of cultural uplift our country needs to get out of the morass we are in and take a real step forward. It would be a good thing if our elders should call a national convention of prominent persons from the many sections of the population involved to consider the matter and evolve a clear programme for future action. In all such consideration our eye should be on the nation. It is the nation that has borne us, brought us up, and is trying to make men of us. It works through human agents. At the best they are fallible; at the worst wicked. If the action of the agents hurts us we may complain, but should do nothing that will hurt the nation. The priest in the temple may treat us badly but we cannot give up the object of our worship. Indeed this is the thought that should determine our attitude in life all the time. If all of us did our best all the time forgetting self and being devoted to the nation, we would in time rise to the heights of our destiny. Material prosperity is important. Ascent in culture is equally important. In achieving that prosperity we must use the opportunity to ascend in culture. The time has come for all of us to think and feel as one man, to put the country before self, and raise the level of knowledge and culture of the population to the highest of which we are aware at present. Only so shall we win for India the greatness that is worthy of its ancient tradition and enable it to fulfil its destiny as the eldest among the nations.

May the power that guides mankind to its destiny guide our country to achieve this altitude in culture and function effectively in its role of eldest brother!

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